

Buckeye Flyer



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Flyers get their wings wet

By Tech. Sgt. Charles K. Miller
445th Public Affairs



Pilots, flight engineers and load masters from the 445th Airlift Wing flying squadron climb aboard a 20-man raft during water survival training at Bass Lake on base. (Photo by Senior Airman Chris Polites)

Twice every summer the 445th Airlift Wing's Life Support Shop, part of the Operations Support Squadron, takes a couple dozen pilots, flight engineers and loadmasters and dumps them in Bass Lake.

The reason? Required water survival training for the 445th flight crews.

This time it was July 10, 2005, just hours before the Wing picnic, when twenty-two members of the 356th and 89th Airlift Squadrons were gathered near the boat dock of Bass Lake.

This once-every-three-years training shouldn't be described as just a formality or mundane, according to Tech. Sgt. Tracy Cooper, a flight engineer with the 356th Airlift Squadron.

"Here we are given updates on currently used equipment and training on

new equipment we get to use. The training is clear, very concise and easy to understand," said Sgt. Cooper.

Master Sgt. Alan Berens led the team of instructors and cadre from the life support squadron and brought a truck full of gear for the flyers to use.

"We have the 20-man life raft; the full survival kit; the adult/child life preserver that is one piece but carries an adult and a child; the infant cot and more," Sgt. Berens said.

Life Support also brought the CWU16P "poopy suit" which covers the entire body and is used in cold water. The suit adds an hour to surviving in frigid water. Additionally, a forest penetrator, used by U.S. Coast Guard and Navy helicopters for water rescues, was present for participants to see its capabilities.

Combat survival training is also required of flight crews. Part of that training has Life Support taking the flyers into the woods and giving them grid coordinates and compasses. The Life Support cadre then turn around and act as enemy combatants, trying to complicate the flyers efforts to reach safety.

The "final exam" for the water survival training included inflating a personal life preserver, jumping into the lake, teaming up with another crewman, swimming 50 yards, and properly boarding the 20-man raft. While calls of "cannon ball!" and "get out of my swimming pool" were heard, there was little doubt the flyers definitely took the training seriously.

"It's a good idea to do this," a soaking wet Sgt. Cooper concluded.

General sees ‘seamless’ force in Southwest Asia

By Master Sgt. Norma Terry
U.S. Central Command Air Forces
Forward Public Affairs

SOUTHWEST ASIA—Everyone is on the same team, wears the same uniform and performs the same mission. As a result, people can’t tell the difference between active-duty, Air Force Reserve Command and Air National Guard troops.

That’s the impression Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley, chief of Air Force Reserve and AFRC commander, got on his visit to Iraq and Afghanistan in late June and early July.

The general visited Airmen in several locations with Michael L. Dominguez, acting secretary of the Air Force; Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau; and Chief Master Sgt. David Popp, command chief master sergeant for Air Combat Command.

“The Air Force is bringing great combat power to this fight in our war on terrorism,” said General Bradley during a troop call. “In Iraq folks are doing tremendous work in very difficult conditions.

“We’ve visited several places and have seen the same thing at every stop – people who are totally focused on the mission,” he said. “We’ve been out on the flight line visiting people who do different jobs – tankers, fighters and C-130s on the ramp where the average temperature is 115 degrees, so it’s probably 130 degrees on the ramp. Everyday in conditions like that people are working hard to keep our airplanes in good shape so crews can fly sorties to help our Soldiers and Marines who are out there doing a tough job in the combat zone.”

In most cases, Air Force reservists and Air National Guardsmen volunteer for

deployments. About 20 percent of them are employed full-time by the Air Force. The rest of them work in civilian jobs outside the Air Force, yet they still volunteer to deploy.

Sometimes that’s not easy to do, the general explained. The appreciation of the willingness of reservists and guardsmen to deploy voluntarily is one of the main reasons for General Bradley’s visit.

“I want to make sure they understand how much we appreciate what they’re doing for us because when they volunteer to come over here they are helping the Air Force and they are also making themselves better Airmen,” he said. “They learn more of what it is to be an expeditionary Airman and they become better employees and better Airmen for us in the future.”

This was the general’s first trip to Iraq and Afghanistan. He is pleased with the caliber of the reservists he’s seen.

“Most people I’ve talked with – the leaders over here – tell me great stories of dedication,” he said. “They tell of the high experience levels and the maturity of our people.

In his nearly 38 years of military service, General Bradley said he has never seen a better force of men and women.

“I think our people are more professional, more dedicated, more serious about their mission, better trained, better prepared



Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley (left), commander of Air Force Reserve Command, meets A-10 aircraft maintainers in Afghanistan June 30. The general commanded the Air Force Reserve’s 442nd Fighter Wing from July 1989 to January 1993 when the A-10 unit was at Richards-Gebaur Air Force Base, Mo. (U.S. Air Force photo by Lt. Col. Anthony J. Seely)

and better led than they’ve been in any time in my career,” he said. “I’m really proud of the leaders we have, the commanders, the senior NCOs, first sergeants – the leaders of our force.

“The honor has not just been in visiting reservists but seeing all the Airmen – Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve and active-duty – because we’re really all alike.” (AFRC News Service)

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Golden Medic heightens Air Force, Army battle readiness

by Senior Airman Nicole Talbert
445th Public Affairs

Although job responsibilities differ between Air Force and Army units, a U.S. Army Reserve Command training exercise, Golden Medic, brought them together for a common reason; to enhance overall training and battle readiness.

Ten members of the 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron were among more than 2,000 military members who met at Fort Gordon, Augusta Regional Airport, Ga., and Fort McCoy, Wis., June 10-22, 2005, during the USARC's largest peacetime medical exercise done annually. Air Force Reserve units, Army Reserve, Army National Guard, and active Army came from all over the United States to participate.

"It is intended to help the Army Reserves work with Air Force medical units to prepare them for the kind of scenes faced in Iraq," said Maj. Edward Gruber, of the Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, Robins Air Force Base in Warner Robins, Ga.

These medical units participate in mock war situations using scenarios that mimic real events that have taken place in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom.

"Golden Medic has given them an idea of what to expect after the 12-day exercise. To watch them grow was just awesome," said Capt. Dane Gambill, of the 445th AES Aircrew Training.

The captain said many had never deployed before and were new to their units, meanwhile others were doing jobs they hadn't done before.

Capt. Gambill was an example of a participant learning a new job. He has previously deployed as a flyer but after completing the exercise, he is now better prepared to deploy as a nurse.

"The most realistic exercise is when we did multiple [patient] on loads and off loads," said Capt. Gambill.

The participants were dressed in "battle rattle," helmets and bullet proof vests. The heat index was near 106 degrees and communications were limited due to the loud hum of engines during a 'tail-to-tail swap.' A CH-47 Chinook helicopter landed near a runway, where litters were rushed off the helicopter and loaded on a C-17 cargo aircraft.

In a real-world situation, combat medics on Army helicopters would take patients from the battlefield to a Combat Support Hospital. CSH [pronounced 'cash'], are hospitals constructed from scratch using deployable medical systems. The



Members from the 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron (left to right), Tech. Sgt. Tina McNamara, Maj. Rick Williams, Senior Master Sgt. Cynthia Walter, Capt. Dane Gambill, and Senior Airman Patrick McCoy demonstrated how to care for a patient by using a breathing bag and a cardiac transport monitor. (Photo by Senior Airman Chris Polites)

Air Force has a liaison at the CSH where patients are inprocessed. An aeromedical evacuation crew is alerted to meet patients and transport them to Balad, Iraq as a central point. A 445th C-141 then takes the patients to Ramstein AB, Germany.

The exercise not only helped to improve the relationship between the Air Force and Army, but it also gave military members an opportunity to work with the latest medical technology.

"There are two things that are saving these guys so they can get back home," said Maj. Gruber. "It's new body armor, because it protects all the vital organs. The other thing is the advent of the microprocessor, because all of the medical equipment is so much smaller now, and the skill levels are so good, we can push forward into the desert."

Spotlight

Exercise had it all - heat, rain, stress

Real world conditions

By Capt Jose A. Cardenas
445th Public Affairs

Members of the 445th Services Flight and Civil Engineering Squadron had to adapt to intense heat, rain and exercise scenarios thrown at them during the scarlet UTA in June. Reservists were working in a field training exercise for their annual requirement and to prepare for the upcoming Inspector General Exercise in October.

Through the heat of the day reservists reacted to each of the exercise situations. Some scenarios were built to see their ability to survive and operate (ATSO) under extreme conditions.

Using skills learned from prior training, the Airman's Manuel, and using team work by looking to experienced individuals for guidance, the weekend's training goals were accomplished. The 445th CES commander was happy with the outcome of the weekend.

"Overall the objectives were taken care of, overall it went pretty well," said Lt. Col. Tom Kuepper.

"It was hot," said the commander. Engineers worked through temperatures in the 90's and heavy humidity and performed a range of duties. These included equipment operations and maintenance as well as improvements to the grounds and buildings in the area.

Services were tested in four func-



Senior Airman Jessica Cottrell starts preparing the evenings meal.



In a modified MOPP level, Senior Airman James Carpenter, 445th CES member, cuts down a tree at PRIME BEEF Training site (top). Senior Airman Jessica Cottrell, 445th SVF, prepares dinner at the PRIME BEEF Training site (bottom). (Photos by Tech. Sgt. Charlie Miller)

tional areas including food services, mortuary, lodging, and fitness/recreation.

"Fourth Air Force came to visit us and provide a readiness assistance visit or RAV for services," said Senior Master Sgt. Julie Haskell. "They saw us perform and gave us feedback on how we all have the tools to pass the IGX."

Senior Airman Jessica Cottrell, from the 445th Services Flight, learned to work with the Mobile Kitchen Trailer, MKT, during her first field training exercise. The exercise helped the airmen gain awareness and realism for their job preparedness.

"I was worried about it (the exercise) but it was not as bad as I had anticipated," said Airman Cottrell. "It was kind of stressful, but fun being in the field."

She continued to explain the importance of teamwork especially when donning chemical protective gear during mission oriented protective posture levels, commonly known as MOPP levels.

"It was difficult at first to put the gear on and work, but very quickly I realized how essential and how helpful having a buddy is to get things accomplished," said Airman Cottrell. "People kept an eye out on everyone else. It's a great feeling knowing you are being cared for ... teamwork is essential!"

Staff Sgt. Jason Hague, from the 445th Services Flight, valued the lessons

learned in the field and how the enacted scenarios used during the exercise would strengthen their readiness for real world situations.

"This gives me a whole new understanding for the troops overseas that do this everyday for real," said Sgt. Hague. "The heat is unbearable but we only wear the MOPP gear for a short time."

Sgt. Hague also felt teamwork was key for the training experience. He said it was particularly important for experienced individuals to help those who are less experienced for total team readiness.

Although the airmen withstood some extreme circumstances, a storm moved in and changed things a bit.

"It was crazy here last night," said Sgt. Hague. "About thirty minutes prior to serving dinner, a big dust storm hit the area. The sky got very dark and cloudy and then the rain started. All operations had to be quickly moved."

Field training exercises like this one that the 445th Services Flight completed, force airmen to react and respond not only for annual requirements like the IGX, but also when confronted with real world situations.

"As reservists we do it because if you're deployed it will save your life one day," said Airman Cottrell.



District Chief Jacob King, Wright-Patterson Fire Department Station 1 with children of several 445th members at the fire truck.



Chief Ray Combs from 445th AMXS is with Autumn Hines, granddaughter of 89th AS member Tech. Sgt. Debra Claridy.

Kids and reservists liked getting their photo taken with Dayton Dragon's Baseball mascot Heater.



445th Wing Picnic
Photos by Tech. Sgt. Charlie Miller



Reservists enjoying a game of volleyball. The big blue guy in the middle dominated the court.



Senior Master Sgt. J.J. Smith with daughter Madison and fire fighter Jim Snyder.



Command Chief, Chief Master Sgt. Rick Waggy address reservists and family members at the wing picnic.



SGLI increases benefits

By Sgt. Sara Wood, USA
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, July 7, 2005 -

Compensation for the survivors of servicemembers who die in combat zones and insurance coverage for servicemembers will both increase significantly this year, a military pay official said today.

An increase in death gratuity benefits from \$12,500 to \$100,000 already has taken effect, and Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance maximum coverage will increase to \$400,000 starting Sept. 1, said Air Force Col. Virginia Penrod, director of military compensation.

The increase in death benefits took effect May 11 and is dated retroactively to Oct. 7, 2001, Penrod said. This means that survivors of servicemembers who died between Oct. 7, 2001, and May 11, 2005, will receive the increased benefits, as will survivors of servicemembers who die from May 11 on, she said.

The increased benefits are for survivors of servicemembers who die in combat zones, combat operations and combat-related situations, she said. Combat-related situations can include airborne duty, combat training, demolition duty and training exercises, among other things, she said. A policy designating combat areas and situations was given to the individual services in June, and each service is now reviewing cases. Payments already have begun, but the process of identifying and paying all eligible survivors could take several months, she said.

When the increase in SGLI coverage takes effect Sept. 1, it also will be dated retroactively to Oct. 7, 2001, she said. Survivors of servicemembers who died in a combat zone, combat operations or combat-related situations between the October date and Sept. 1 will receive \$150,000 in transitional insurance, which will bring them to the \$400,000 level, she said.



Senior Airman Kira Zyski operates the controls on a refueling truck preparing to refuel an aircraft at Aviano Air Base, Italy. The airman received lots of training do to many of the base personnel were deployed. (courtesy photo)

Training in Italy helps base

by Maj. Ted Theopolos
445th Public Affairs

Forty-one reservists from the 445th Airlift Wing traveled to Europe to perform their annual tour. Air Force reservists deployed to Aviano Air Base, Italy from June 11-25 performing many different jobs.

Aviano Air Base is located at the base of the Dolomites (the Pre-Alps) at the northern end of the Po Valley, and is home to 16th Air Force, 31st Fighter Wing and many temporary duty units supporting Operations Deliberate Forge and Joint Guardian. The closest large city to Aviano is Pordenone, about 10 minutes away, and Venice is only an hour and a half away.

Squadrons from the wing participating in the two week deployment include the 445th Logistics Readiness and Aircraft Maintenance Squadrons, 445th Mission Support Flight and reservists from the headquarters section.

"Aviano had a number of personnel deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and our 445th personnel filled the gaps and received real world training and experience," said Maj. Don Wren, 445th LRS and deployed commander. "This formulates a win-win situation for both the active duty host and our reservists; Aviano receives manpower support and we get much needed - hard training."

Members from the 445th LRS performed duties in fuels, supply vehicle

operations and traffic management.

"Reservists received exposure to fighter aircraft which is not available at Wright-Patt," said Maj. Wren.

Senior Airman Kira Zyski worked in fuels. The airman refueled and defueled aircraft as well as testing fuels. She also worked putting oxygen onto aircraft.

"Training was good," said Airman Zyski. "Half of the fuels shop is deployed so we were getting a lot of training done."

"Members from the personnel flight worked in different areas including orderly rooms," said Staff. Sgt. Claire McDonald. "We helped clear up a back log of over 100 retirement and separations folders that needed processing."

Airman Leah Watts who worked in supply had similar results.

"I worked in the mobility section and helped deploy over 200 military personnel," said Airman Watts.

Other reservists receive training that they couldn't receive back home.

Senior Airman Jeremiah Odom worked in traffic management office. "I helped ship household goods and worked with customs which we don't have back at the base."

Tech. Sgt. Cindy Hall worked in legal and set-up accommodations for witnesses and made seating arrangement in the courtroom for court marital cases.

Reservist returned from Italy knowing they received good training and had a good feeling they helped the base.

Promotions

Congratulations to the following personnel, recently promoted to the rank indicated.

Airman First Class

Rachel Bruce, 445 ASTS
Erin Hodge, 445 ASTS
Danielle Keiser, 445 ASTS
William Willis, 445 CES

Senior Airman

Adam Bowersock, 445 AMXS
James Bowles, 87 APS
Crystal Bush, 445 CF
Mark Glover, 87 APS
Montique Harris, 445 LRS
Tabitha Hatfield, 445 ASTS
Eric Marshall, 87 APS
Trent McClure, 445 LRS
Garrett Milby, 87 APS
Michael Reagan, 445 AMXS
Jamie Roberts, 445 CF
Andrew Surritt III, 445 ASTS
Benjamin Underwood, 445 AMXS
Brandon Winslow, 445 MXS

Staff Sergeant

Glenda Baber, 445 ASTS
Calvitta Collins, 445 AMDS
Troy Fenhoff, 445 OSS
Travis Jenkins, 445 LRS
Jackie Jones, 87 APS
Shannon Marcum, 445 MOF
Amy McCullough, 87 APS
Gabriel McKenna, 445 LRS
Bonnie Jo Morey, 445 CES
Stanley Ramsey, 445 OSS
Ashby Redmond, 445 ASTS
Debra Stinson, 445 ASTS
Sarah Strand, 445 ASTS
Nicole Swango, 445 ASTS
Jason Thornton, 445 MXS
Amy Zaenkert, 445 MOF

Tech Sergeant

Stacey Blurton, 445 ASTS
Gordon Carter, 445 AMDS
Laraine Curley, 445 ASTS
Larry Davis, 445 AES
William Dolan, 87 APS
Steven Ellis, 445 MXS
Donald Floyd, 87 APS
Kimberly Kincaid, 87 APS
Jennifer Leveck, 445 AES

Christopher Suggs, 445 LRS
David Tipton, 87 APS
Willard Vangundy, 445 CES

Master Sergeant

Joseph Kotsko, 445 AES
Robert Mosley, 87 APS
Terry Scott, 87 APS
Gregory Sersion, 445 AES
James Smith, 445 AES

Senior Master Sergeant

Jane Johnson, 445 MSF

Lieutenant Colonel

Scott Provost, 356 AS

Awards

Congratulations to the following 445th AW members who recently earned awards.

Meritorious Service Medal

Lt Col William E. Driver, 356 AS
Lt Col Anne B. Gunter, 445 MSS
Maj Robert P. McCoy, 445 ASTS
CMSgt Michael P. Mathews, 445 ASTS
CMSgt Ronald S. McKasson, 445 MSF
SMSgt John C. Gram, 445 MOF
SMSgt Steven R. Parker, 89 AS
SMSgt Cathy E. Storer, 356 AS
MSgt Bryan W. Ayers, 89 AS
MSgt Donald E. Boudinet, 89 AS
MSgt Rodger K. Cuccio, 89 AS
MSgt Jeffrey S. Davis, 89 AS
MSgt Craig R. Essert, 356 AS

MSgt Ronald J. Gregoncza, 87 APS
MSgt Elaine Norsworthy, 445 MSS
MSgt Thomas A. Troutwine, 445 ASTS
TSgt Gregory D. James, 356 AS

AF Commendation Medal

TSgt Charles M. Cring, 445 MXS
TSgt Janna A. Cronk
Michael T. Ferguson, 445 MXS
TSgt William S. Fisher, 89 AS
TSgt Paul M. Garber II, 89 AS
TSgt Aubrey L. Hunt II, 89 AS
TSgt Ernest E. Lilly, Jr., 445 ASTS
SSgt Anne M. McNevin, 89 AS
TSgt Andrew C. Moats, 445 ASTS
TSgt David H. Peterson, 89 AS
TSgt Michael A. Pollard, 356 AS
TSgt Philip E. Probst, 89 AS
TSgt James C. Robinson, 89 AS

Newcomers

Welcome to the following reservists, recently assigned to the 445th AW:

2LT Tamara Thomas, 445 ASTS
TSGT Alan Fuller, 445 AMXS
TSGT Scott Todd, 445 AMXS
SSG Emanuel Cruz, 445 MXS
SSG Timothy Hobbs, 445 ASTS
SSG Melinda Spitler, 445 AMDS
SRA Allison Medjesky, 445 MXS
SRA Dominique Stepney-Howlett, 445 AS
A1C David Griffith, 445 AMXS
A1C Paul Howlett, 445 LRS
AB Jerry Coulter, 445 CLSS



News Briefs

PA needs your help

The public affairs office receives several calls a day asking if they or their organization can send food or supplies to troops in the Middle East by way of our aircraft.

Although their intent is good, we cannot transport any goods unless approved by AF.

However, there is a web site that help them. The site is American Supports You. Its located at: <http://www.dod.mil/americanupportsyoud/support/help.html>

The site has several links including how to send packages to individuals or to military units in the Middle East.

If asked if we can transport something for them, please refer them to this site. Thanks!

Special thanks!

The wing picnic held at Bass Lake was a roaring success due to the effort by several people. The Chief's Group desires a pat on the back for their organization and effort. There were several other to thank, to numerous to mention, but if you see someone that was working at the picnic, please let them know you appreciate their effort.

Construction has started

Construction has started on the aircraft ramp and will soon start on the old C-141 hangars. Please be careful went traveling near those areas and do not attempt to bypass the construction barriers.

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Former POW signs panel

by Maj. Ted Theopolos
445th Public Affairs

"A True labor of love," said former Vietnam POW Lt. Col. (ret.) Barry Bridger as he walked through the C-141 known as the Hanoi Taxi, on July 7.

The former POW was referring to the photos and memorabilia on the sides of the haul of the vintage aircraft. The aircraft has been dedicated to the POWs that spent time in the Hanoi Hilton during the Vietnam War. The aircraft transported the first 40 POWs out of Gia Lam Airport in Hanoi, North Vietnam on February 12, 1973.

Capt. Bridger, the Air Force rank he held at the time of capture, was shot down in his F-4 Phantom jet January 23, 1967, and was soon captured, remaining a POW for more than six years.

"I was on a daylight bombing run when I was shot down," said Bridger. "My first and last daylight flight. . . I was a nighttime pilot."

Bridger walked up and down the aircraft with another former POW, Maj. Gen. (ret.) Edward Mechenbier, going from one photo to the next. Mechenbier was also shot down in an F-4 in June 1967 and was a POW for nearly six years.



Master Sgt. Henry Harlow (left) shows Lt. Col. (ret.) Barry Bridger (center) a POW book as Maj. Gen. Ed Mechenbier looks on. (photos by SrA Chris Polites)



Former POW Lt. Col. (ret.) Barry Bridger is the 109th signature on the POW panel in the Hanoi Taxi.

Bridger recognized several individuals in photos placed on the haul of the aircraft. He continues to keep in contact with several members, but for those he has lost contact with, he would turn to Mechenbier and ask about their health.

"Bless his heart," Bridger said several times knowing the health conditions of several former inmates he knew.

Bridger remembers boarding the aircraft that transported him to Clark Air Base, Philippines.

"I boarded the aircraft on a stretcher," said Bridger. "I had flu-like symptoms, so they wouldn't let me walk on. I remember a nurse greeting me with a kiss. I said to her, 'that was dangerous,' not because I was ill, but because I haven't seen a pretty girl in a long time."

Bridger was given a book on the history of the flight made by Master Sgt. Henry Harlow from the 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. The former POW graciously accepted the book and said, "Bless your heart."

The former POW stated, "to survive great storms of your life is with a good heart."

After touring the aircraft, he was asked to add his signature to the POW panel. He was honored to be 109th POW to sign. Below his signature he wrote "God Bless the U.S.A."

